

Comfort measures and non-pharmacological methods of pain relief in labor

1st stage labor

Position Changes

Walking, rocking, squatting, using a birthing ball

Breathing Techniques

Rhythmic breathing, slow-paced breathing to promote relaxation.

Massage & Touch

Back rubs, counter-pressure on lower back

Hydrotherapy

Warm showers or immersion in a birthing tub

Heat/Cold Therapy

Warm compresses on lower back; cold packs for areas of discomfort

Emotional Support

Continuous support from a doula, partner, or nurse

Visualization and Meditation

Guided imagery to focus away from pain

Environment Control

Dim lighting, calming music, privacy



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2nd stage labor

Effective Pushing Positions

Upright positions (squatting, kneeling, side-lying) help reduce perineal trauma and shorten labor

Warm Compresses

Applied to perineum to reduce pain and risk of tearing

Verbal Encouragement

Positive reinforcement and coaching

Focused Breathing

Helps maintain oxygenation and concentration

Mirror or Touch for Feedback

Some women find comfort seeing or feeling the baby crowning

TENS

(Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation unit) is a small, portable, battery-operated device that uses low-voltage electrical currents to relieve pain

Distraction Techniques

focusing on a photo, squeezing a comb in hand, or a mantra

For more information:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2019). Approaches to limit intervention during labor and birth (Committee Opinion No. 766). *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 133(2), e164–e173. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000003074>

Gizzo, S., Di Gangi, S., Noventa, M., Bacile, V., Zambon, A., & Nardelli, G. B. (2014). Women's choice of positions during labour: Return to the past or a modern way to give birth? A cohort study in Italy. *BioMed Research International*, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2014/638093>

Simkin, P., Bolding, A. (2004). Update on nonpharmacologic approaches to relieve labor pain and prevent suffering. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, 49(6), 489–504. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmwh.2004.07.007>

